



Further draft and transit improvements at the Panama Canal

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Panama Canal Authority

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) has announced another increase in draft and daily transits.

The maximum authorised draft was raised by another 30 cm yesterday to 14.3 m, and will increase to 14.63 m on July 11.

Additionally, a new booking slot for the neopanamax locks will be added beginning on August 5, bringing the total number of transits to 35 ships per day.

The canal's continued progression is informed by the current and projected water levels of Gatun Lake, and the arrival of the rainy season in the Panama Canal watershed.

Despite the arrival of the rainy season, the challenge of water for Panama and the Panama Canal remains.

Potential solutions include the identification of alternative sources of water from the 51 watersheds and lakes in Panama, along with projects that can increase storage capacity to ensure water availability for the entire Panamanian population and the canal's operation.

Since May last year, the ACP has had to cut back daily transits on the waterway as the nation fought a massive drought – the worst on record.

The incoming new president of Panama has put water levels at the country's canal as one of his most important items on his agenda. Jose Raul Mulino will take office for a five-year term from July.

Interviewed by *Reuters* last month, Mulino said he would try and get lawmakers to approve a law enabling the Panama Canal to build large water reservoirs to combat droughts.

The law, which would grant the waterway permission to operate on land needed for the reservoirs, would be the first approved under his administration, Mulino said.